

Message Text

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SUBJECT: MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS - NANCY

1. SUMMARY: IN A TIGHT THREE CORNERED RACE IN NANCY, IN WHICH SECRETAIRE D'ETAT CLAUDE COULAIS REPRESENTS THE MAJORITY, OBSERVERS BELIEVE THE GROUP LED BY INCUMBENT MAYOR MARCEL MARTIN WILL BE ELECTED ON THE 2ND ROUND. HOWEVER, THE LEFT HAS A STRONG TICKET AND WOULD EASILY WIN IF NEITHER OF THE TICKETS ON THE RIGHT RETIRES. END SUMMARY.

2. AMONG MORE INTERESTING MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN THIS DISTRICT ARE THOSE TO BE HELD IN NANCY WHERE INCUMBENT MAYOR MARCEL MARTIN IS OPPOSED BY LEFT AND RIGHT.

3. MARTIN, A FORMER SENATOR, IS SOMETHING OF A MAVERICK IN POLITICS. NOT A SOCIALIST, HE NEVERTHELESS INCLUDED SOCIALISTS ON HIS TICKET FIVE YEARS AGO, WHICH WON ON THE FIRST TOUR. MARTIN, HOWEVER, BROKE WITH SOCIALISTS ON THE QUESTION OF THE "PROGRAMME COMMUN", AND THE LEFT WILL BE REPRESENTED BY A SOCIALIST-COMMUNIST TICKET WITH A COUPLE OF LEFT RADICALS THROWN IN FOR THE SAKE OF APPEARANCES.

4. PROFITING FROM HIS LOSS OF SUPPORT ON THE LEFT AND PERHAPS HOPING TO SETTLE OLD SCORES, A NUMBER OF MARTIN'S SUPPORTERS OF
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THE CENTER AND RI, AFTER SECURING THE SUPPORT OF THEIR NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND AFTER LONG HESITATION, FINALLY SETTLED ON CLAUDE COULAIS, STATE SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY TO LEAD THE BATTLE FOR THE NANCY CITY HALL. COULAIS' SELECTION WAS NOT EASILY MADE. WHILE THERE ARE VERY APPARENT ADVANTAGES TO THE CITY IN HAVING AS ITS MAYOR, A MINISTER WHO IS ALSO CLOSE TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, COULAIS' STYLE IS BELIEVED BY

MANY TO BE TOO COOL AND DISTANT TO LEAD THE "OFFICIAL" MAJORITY TO VICTORY IN A TIGHT THREE CORNERED RACE. COULAIS HIMSELF DID NOT EVINCE GREAT ENTHUSIASM FOR THE JOB, AND DELAYED HIS DECISION UNTIL FORCED INTO IT BY THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF PROMINENT LOCAL IND. REP. , CLAUDE HURIET OF HIS INTENTION TO SEEK THE POST OF MAYOR. HURIET WITHDREW HIS CANDIDACY, WHEN COULAIS FINALLY ENTERED THE RACE, AND PROBABLY WILL SIT OUT THE CAMPAIGN, WHICH WILL NOT HELP COULAIS CHANCES.

5. WHILE THE MAJORITY - WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF THE RPR AT NATIONAL LEVEL - HAS BEEN TRYING TO FIND A LEADER, MARTIN HAS BEEN VERY ACTIVE. HIS WELL FINANCED GROUP HAS PUBLISHED AN ATTRACTIVE BROCHURE ON THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF HIS GROUP DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS AND FIVE PAMPHLETS SETTING OUT IN DETAIL VARIOUS ASPECTS OF ITS PRESENT AND FUTURE PROGRAM. MARTIN HAS A RECORD OF SOLID ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE FIELDS OF URBAN RENEWAL, RATIONALIZATION AND REGULATION OF CITY TRAFFIC, WORK WITH SENIOR CITIZENS, AND CULTURAL AND SPORT ACTIVITIES. HE HAS BEEN LESS SUCCESSFUL AS AN ADMINISTRATOR. CERTAIN COMPANIES, WITH WHICH HE IS OR WAS ASSOCIATED, PLAYED A PROMINENT ROLE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MUCH CRITICIZED HOTEL IN THE CENTER OF THE CITY AND BECAME INVOLVED IN A CONTROVERSY CONCERNING THE TAXES THEY SHOULD PAY TO THE CITY. THIS SITUATION LED TO MUCH PUBLIC CRITICISM OF THE MAYOR. AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, MARTIN SEEMS TO HAVE OVERCOME THE INITIAL UNFAVORABLE REACTION AND TO HAVE REGAINED MUCH SUPPORT.

6. THE LEFT HAS PROPOSED A TICKET LED BY GERARD CUREAU, AN ASSISTANT MAYOR IN THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION, A JUDGE, AND WELL UNCLASSIFIED

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KNOWN FOR HIS ADMINISTRATIVE TALENTS. A MEMBER OF THE RIGHT WING OF HIS PARTY, PROMINENT IN THE ASSOCIATION FRANCE/ETATS-UNIS, CUREAU REPRESENTS THE BEST CANDIDATE OF THE LEFT FOR THE BASICALLY CONSERVATIVE ELECTORATE OF NANCY. HOWEVER, THE PRESENCE OF 14 COMMUNIST CANDIDATES ON A TOTAL LIST OF 41 IN A CITY WHERE THE COMMUNISTS HAVE NEVER TAKEN MORE THAN 8% OF A TOTAL VOTE IS SIGNIFICANT IMPEDIMENT TO HIS SUCCESS. NEVERTHELESS CUREAU BELIEVES THE LEFT WILL HOLD OR EVEN IMPROVE THE 40% OF THE VOTE WHICH MITTERAND RECEIVED IN 1974.

7. A RECENT POLL GIVES THE LEFT 42% ON THE FIRST ROUND, MARTIN 30% AND COULAIS 25%. THUS IF NEITHER OF THE TWO GROUPS OPPOSING THE LEFT RETIRES AT THE END OF THE FIRST ROUND, THE LEFT WILL WIN. MARTIN HAS SAID HE WILL NOT RETIRE. IF HIS GROUP SHOULD COME IN SECOND IN THE FIRST ROUND, COULAIS WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY WITHDRAW, AND THE ELECTION ON THE SECOND ROUND WOULD GO TO MARTIN, WHO WOULD GAIN THE VOTES OF THE MAJORITY GROUP. UNDOUBTEDLY HE WOULD ALSO GAIN THE VOTES OF MANY SOCIALISTS, WHO AFTER VOTING FOR THEIR PRINCIPLES ON THE FIRST ROUND, WOULD THEN VOTE

FOR MARTIN RATHER THAN SEE 14 COMMUNISTS INCLUDING THE 2ND DEPUTY MAYOR, IN THE CITY HALL.

8. FOR COULAIS THE SITUATION IS DIFFERENT. MARTIN HAS ALWAYS ENJOYED SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT ON THE LEFT AND EVEN SHOULD HE WITHDRAW IT IS NOT CERTAIN THAT THIS PART OF HIS SUPPORT WOULD GO TO COULAIS AND THE MAJORITY. SOME MIGHT ABSTAIN, OTHERS MIGHT VOTE FOR THE LEFT. IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, THE LEFT MIGHT VERY WELL WIN THE CITY HALL. NEVERTHELESS, MY GUESS AT THIS POINT IS THAT MARTIN WILL BE RETURNED.ROMINE

NOTE: & - PERCENT.

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